

February 23, 2023

Members of the Education Appropriations Subcommittee

State Capitol Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Proposed Budget on Education

Good evening and thank you for being here actively listening to your constituents.

I come to you from Bridgeport CT. my name is Melissa Franco.

I sell real estate all over Fairfield, New Haven, Litchfield and Hartford counties. I am here before you to share my dismay and utter shock at this administration's proposed budget, related to education. And in particular to public charter schools which stand to receive a Zero increase. That is unacceptable.

I've always been involved in my local elections; I've worked at polling stations and this year I went door to door knocking and asking my neighbors to vote, advocating for many that sit currently as elected officials.

When this budget was released, there was NOT One cent of additional money going towards public charters, as I stated initially...Nothing to open two more schools that are approved but not funded. Nothing for the agreed upon phase-in of weighted funding.

By signing off on this budget you're saying to me that education is not a priority; that even in this year of surplus, education will once again be overlooked. Maybe I shouldn't have knocked on so many doors and asked my neighbors to vote-so that we could be part of the change our city needs!

I personally sought a choice school and remain grateful for the opportunity I was given!

In my profession as a realtor, the first questions after price and bedrooms are "how are the schools?" While I can't answer that directly, I can direct them to the statistics and scores and how the home they are envisioning for their family will serve their kids or future kids. When available I can send links to tell them about inter-districts and charters and private institutions so they know there will be choices available to them.

Most of my buyer clients in the past years have been New Yorkers who are very familiar with charter schools and dread having to take their kids from such hands-on and involved schools. Specifically, I can tell you, I helped a family purchase a lovely home in the Danbury area who were excited for the possibility to enroll their grade school

children, but here we are almost 3 years in and no update... even longer for those who fought to get the school approved in the first place.

As part of my work, I make a little welcome package to all my clients including information on spots to eat and my personal reviews! I add UPS address change forms, I.D. the local DMV, so they can register in their New State, and include voting locations and how they can get involved.

I try to do my part in my work and in my community; I hope that those elected to speak on my behalf also do their part and fight to fund education according to the needs of all students, including our charter students!

Stand with me for ALL students across CT. Thank you for your time!

Respectfully,
Melissa Franco
Bridgeport CT.